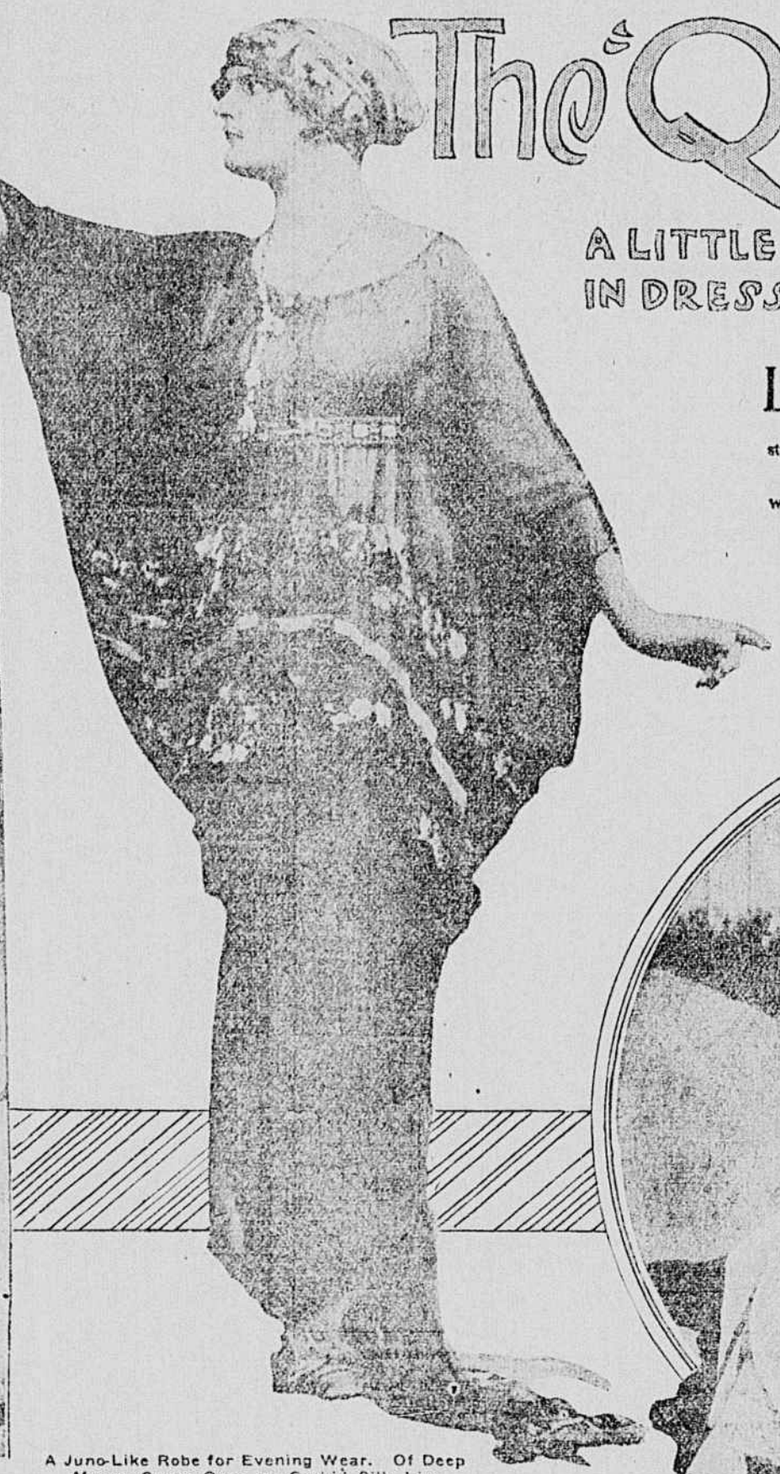
# The "Quaint" in Fashions

## A LITTLE LESSON IN GOOD TASTE IN DRESS BY LADY DUFF-GORDON

LADY DUFF-GORDON, the famous "Lucile" of London, and foremost creator of fashions in the world, writes each week the fashion article for this newspaper, presenting all that is newest and best in styles for well-dressed women.

Lady Duff-Gordon's Paris establishment brings her into close touch with that centre of fashion.



A Juno-Like Robe for Evening Wear. Of Deep Mauve Crepe Over an Orchid Silk Lining, It Is Quaint and Effective When Worn by a Statuesque Woman of Vivid Coloring.

A Pretty Summer Dress.

The Girlish Costume of the Sitting Figure Is of Rose-Colored Messaline Over a Petticoat of White Batiste and Valenciennes Lace. The "Baby Dress" Worn by the Standing Figure Is Quaintly Becoming.

The Newest Mid-Summer Gown.

A New Autumn Coat That Is Quaint on This Wearer Because Adapted to Her Individual Style. It Is of Burgundy Broadcloth, with Collar of Black Velvet and Facings of Black and White Striped Silk.

By Lady Duff-Gordon.

IT is desirable to be quaint in dress. It is undesirable to be bizarre. I will explain.

When we say "She dresses quaintly" we mean "She dresses in an unusual way, oddly, neatly, in singular fashion." If this unusualness is kept within the bounds of good taste, and if it is peculiar to herself, distinctive and becoming, it is high praise to so say of any one. But to say "She dresses in a bizarre fashion" is to admit that there is in her dress an element of the grotesque. She has carried quaintness beyond the limit of good taste. Endeavoring to be picturesque, she has made of herself a caricature.

The costumes photographs of which are reproduced on this page are quaint. While they are unusual, they are not so unusual as to be unbecoming to the type of young woman who wears them. They are distinctive, and within the bounds of good taste. By the most hypercritical they could not be ranked as bizarre.

The evening gown suggests the majesty of Juno. In outline it borrows from the old Roman. In coloring it recalls the moonlight. Those who have inspected it in my house in Paris have said, "Ah, it is like a brilliant moonlight on the Seine." It is of rich mauve crepe. The draped short tunic is embroidered in silver. The girdle is of silver embroidered upon a foundation of violet velvet. The draped skirt is of the mauve crepe, gathered at one side, falling in a short, narrow train. The whole is built upon a foundation of orchid silk. The heavy necklace is of silver. If this were worn by a short, dumpy woman, one without distinction, it would be a failure. On a tall, imperial woman, with strong but regular features, it is quaint.

It would be as successful in midnight blue, that shade of blue that is so dark that it is almost black, and is truly comparable only to the sky depths on a starlit night. Made of this shade of chiffon over silver colored lining, it would be exquisite. Or over a lining of the same shade of blue and with a garniture of gold embroidery it would be superb on a tall, statuesque woman of less vivid color than that type which would be especially happy in the moonlight shades.

The young women grouped at the centre of the page are examples of quaint gowning. Their apparel is "different." It is out of the ordinary, but not so far out as to be grotesque. It is adapted to their type. It is neat and fresh and dainty. The gown worn by the sitting figure is of rose messaline over a petticoat of white mousseline de soie, with trimmings of valenciennes. It is draped from the high belt, the fulness being gathered about the hips, giving a pannier-like effect. The corsage is surplice effect in in front, and the elbow sleeves are of the always graceful kimono style. The front is filled in with white maline. The hat is of rose-colored straw, trimmed with narrow black velvet ribbon. A small bunch of blue cornflowers at the side of the hat offers a chic note of contrast to the costume. The parasol is of the same shade of rose color as the gown, the narrow flounce being faced with chiffon of cornflower blue. Into the wide, graduated girdle the two colors, rose and cornflower blue, enter.

Her companion is in white mousseline. The short gathered baby waist, with its narrow frill, the scant gathered skirt, finished by a narrow flounce of simple embroidery and outlined below the knees with similar insertion, is peculiarly infantile. Even the sleeves are gathered as in an infant's gown above the elbow, a style, by the way, that is peculiarly becoming to thin arms, and held in place as the skirt about the ankles, the blouse at the belt and about the low-cut neck by baby ribbon of black velvet. The wide-brimmed sailor hat is faced by black velvet. The introduction of the black velvet takes from what might be a too pronounced infantile note in the costume, giving the young wearer a suggestion of "grown-up" dignity.

The early Autumn coat shown in another cut might be bizarre if worn by some types, but on the young woman possessing the gift of natural dignity it is merely and pleasantly quaint. Of a deep yet rich shade of Burgundy broadcloth, it is full at the shoulders in front, hangs straight and full at the back, and the sleeves, unusually roomy at the shoulders, are full at the elbow and wrist, the fulness confined at the wrist by a band of the broadcloth. A broad coat collar of black velvet enriches the wrap, and a note of quaintness is provided by the facing of the revers and front with silk in black and white stripes. Large outside pockets furnish convenience and give to the garment a mannish note. The coat, which is seven-eighths length, would be effective, though less quaint, in dark blue.

Quaintness is inseparable from the Kate Greenaway costumes, the Dolly Varden flowered muslins and flowing sashes and close-fitting bonnets; also with the many flounced costumes surmounted by a cousin of the poke bonnet. But if worn by persons to whose individual style they do not lend themselves they may be bizarre.

The new fashions of the Autumn, I am happy to say, tend toward the simplicity that is the expression of good taste. For example, they are for the most part in one tone. One-tone gowns or costumes always make for the elegance of simplicity, or if there be relief from the one tone it is slight, confining itself to what artists term "accents" and home dressmakers "touches" of color.

The redingote not only impends. It is here. But it is in straighter lines than those we have seen in the portraits of our mothers and grandmothers. The redingote of that period was bouffant. It "bunched"—to use the term of that time—at the hips. The redingotes of to-day fall nearly straight from shoulder to knees, and over the narrow skirt give a military effect.

It is a graceful garment, and may be made becoming to every figure by some adaptations. It is foolish to say of a new mode, "I cannot and will not wear it." Far better say, "I will first try it on a model." It is one of the subtleties of dress that we cannot say of this color or that model, "I cannot wear it," and yet when we "try it on" are surprised to find that it is becoming. One reason for this contradiction in dress is that we ourselves change subtly, and some of us for the better, so that the gown or shade that was impossible to us last year may be an excellent framework for our personality this season.

Study yourself and be fluid in spirit. Do not stand rock-like against any innovation of the time, but say, "I will try whether it be becoming." Be not narrow in your studies of clothes. Be catholic in your admirations. But be firm in your final decision. So you will achieve quaintness.

# Why Old Age Really Does Dry Us Up.

ACCORDING to the latest discoveries, the term "dried up," so often applied to old men and women, is scientifically correct. "Drying up" is what actually does happen to our bodies as they advance in age, and there is at least as much truth as poetry in the comparison of youth to a juicy young bough and old age to a dry, withered limb on the tree of life.

Professor G. Marinesco, of the University of Bucharest, has recently discovered that our flesh is made up mostly of chemical compounds of the colloid type, consisting of jelly-like or glue-like substances that do not crystallize. This type of substances, he says, "grow old" chemically whether they form a part of a living body or not.

Growing old, then, is a process from which there is no escape, because the chemicals in our bodies are so constituted that they must inevitably undergo it. Old age is fatally written in our tissues from the moment they come into being. The drying up which marks it begins when we stop growing and becomes more and more rapid the nearer we approach death.

Until Professor Marinesco attacked the problem, the study of the problems of old age has neglected its chemical side almost completely and has totally ignored the important changes which take place in the colloidal cells. Thanks to his investigations, we now know that these colloids, whether organic or inorganic, have a vital curve and must consequently follow in their evolution a fixed course more or less similar to that of the living elements.

Not only do these jelly-like substances dry up as they grow old, but they often become fibrous and stringy. Diffusion through them becomes more difficult and their chemical properties undergo radical changes. All these changes are precisely those which take place in living organism as they grow old.

The slow but sure loss of water with age has been noted in the tissues of rats and other animals. There is more water in the bodies of all young animals than in adults and the quantity of nitrogen and phosphorus they contain also diminishes with age.

The changes which the body's cells undergo explain not only why we all die eventually but also why we don't keep on growing until death overtakes us.

As the colloid substances grow old they become less fluid and offer a much greater resistance to the various chemical processes on which life depends. Nutrition is blocked and this results in the stoppage of growth—a stage that is reached in human beings at a comparatively earlier period than in other animals.

This increased blockade of nutrition as the cells become drier and more fibrous or stringy explains why we loose our vigor and are subject to all sorts of ailments as we become old.

Of course many external causes may have a hand in hastening the processes of old age and death. But even if all these external causes were removed Professor Marinesco believes that the colloid cells would eventually dry up and die just as a plant does when deprived of water.